

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 3 and 6 without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter.

Please amend claims 1 and 4 as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) A fixing method comprising:

heat-pressure-fixing an unfixed toner image formed on a recording medium by using fixing means,

wherein the unfixed toner image is fixed when the recording medium passes through at least two fixing units arranged in series in a conveying direction of the recording medium,

wherein a toner for forming the unfixed toner image comprises a toner containing a release agent, and

wherein the following formulas (1) and (2) are satisfied when a maximum temperature on the recording medium when the recording medium passes through a first fixing unit is denoted by  $T1$ , a maximum temperature on the recording medium when the recording medium passes through a second fixing unit is denoted by  $T2$ , a minimum temperature on the recording medium during a time period commencing on ejection of the recording medium from the first fixing unit and ending on entry of the recording medium into the second fixing unit is denoted by  $t$ , a flow tester softening temperature of the toner is denoted by  $Ts$ , and a flow starting temperature of the toner is denoted by  $Tfb$ :

$$T1 > Tfb \quad \text{formula (1)}$$

$$T2 > t > Ts \quad \text{formula (2)}$$

wherein the maximum temperature T1 on a recording medium when the recording medium passes through a first fixing unit is 110 to 160 °C, and the maximum temperature T2 on the recording medium when the recording medium passes through a second fixing unit is 140 to 190 °C, and

wherein a peak temperature of a maximum endothermic peak is in a range of 60 to 140 °C in an endothermic curve in differential scanning calorimetry on the toner.

2. (Previously Presented) The fixing method according to claim 1, wherein, when a flow tester 1/2 method melting temperature of the toner is denoted by T1/2, T1/2 and T2 satisfy the following formula (3):

$$T2 > T1/2 \quad \text{formula (3).}$$

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently Amended) A fixing device comprising:

fixing means for heat-pressure-fixing an unfixed toner image formed on a recording medium, the fixing means comprising fixing units which are heat-pressure-fixing type devices,

wherein the unfixed toner image is fixed when the recording medium passes through at least two of the fixing units arranged in series in a conveying direction of the recording medium,

wherein a toner for forming the unfixed toner image comprises a toner containing a release agent, and

wherein the following formulas (1) and (2) are satisfied when a maximum temperature on the recording medium when the recording medium passes through a first fixing unit is denoted by  $T1$ , a maximum temperature on the recording medium when the recording medium passes through a second fixing unit is denoted by  $T2$ , a minimum temperature on the recording medium during a time period commencing on ejection of the recording medium from the first fixing unit and ending on entry of the recording medium into the second fixing unit is denoted by  $t$ , a flow tester softening temperature of the toner is denoted by  $Ts$ , and a flow starting temperature of the toner is denoted by  $Tfb$ :

$$T1 > Tfb \quad \text{formula (1)}$$

$$T2 > t > Ts \quad \text{formula (2)}$$

wherein the maximum temperature  $T1$  on a recording medium when the recording medium passes through a first fixing unit is 110 to 160 °C, and the maximum temperature  $T2$  on the recording medium when the recording medium passes through a second fixing unit is 140 to 190 °C, and

wherein a peak temperature of a maximum endothermic peak is in a range of 60 to 140 °C in an endothermic curve in differential scanning calorimetry on the toner.

5. (Previously Presented) The fixing device according to claim 4, wherein, when a flow tester 1/2 method melting temperature of the toner is denoted by  $T_{1/2}$ ,  $T_{1/2}$  and  $T_2$  satisfy the following formula (3):

$$T_2 > T_{1/2} \quad \text{formula (3).}$$

6. (Cancelled)